

OIT 10264-88

17 AUG 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Policy and Coordination Staff, DO

FROM: Edward J. Maloney
Director of Information TechnologySUBJECT: Limits on Ability of Current Computer Systems to Handle
DO Intelligence Cable Processing and Dissemination

REFERENCE: Your Memo, dtd 12 Jul 88, Same Subject

1. The Executive Director has forwarded your memorandum to this office for response which follows. A direct request to this office outlining your concerns would have enabled us to be more responsive. Nevertheless, the following information will serve as a reply to your memorandum.

2. We have reviewed the current capabilities of the CIA Headquarters message handling computers per your request in the referenced memo, and are taking steps to expand these capabilities. The Cable Dissemination System (CDS) has already been modified, leaving the Electronic Cable Origination Handler (ECOH) as the limiting factor.

4. Currently, the largest cable which ECOH can process is 4,000 lines; by October 1988 we plan to increase this to 8,000 lines. Between now and October, with prior arrangement and programmer assistance, we can handle cables up to 8,000 lines on special request. Cables exceeding these lengths will need to be split into multiple cables sectionalized and transmitted separately.

5. It should be noted that when a long message is received into ECOH, even after all software changes have been made, no other cable traffic regardless of precedence will be processed until the large cable is completely sent. This large cable will halt all inbound and outbound traffic. It could take 45 minutes to an hour to send out a cable of this size.

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SUBJECT: Limits on Ability of Current Computer Systems to Handle
DO Intelligence Cable Processing and Dissemination [redacted]

6. As you can see, efforts were underway prior to your request to the Executive Director. In the future, I believe a direct request to this office reflecting your concerns would be more appropriate. Our focal point for this enhancement effort is [redacted] Deputy Chief, Operations Group. For further information, he can be reached on [redacted]

Edward J. Maloney *for*

DC/OG/OIT [redacted] 15 Aug 88/ [redacted]

Distribution:

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12 JUL 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director

VIA: Deputy Director for Operations

25X1 FROM: [REDACTED]
Chief, Policy and Coordination StaffSUBJECT: Limitations on Ability of Current Computer Systems to Handle
DO Intelligence Cable Processing and Dissemination

1. Action Requested: This memorandum contains a request that the current capabilities of CIA message-handling computers be examined and steps considered to eliminate the serious limitations described below.

2. Background: Intelligence cables arriving at Headquarters are transferred electronically from the Office of Communications Cable Dissemination System (CDS) to the Message Processing System (MPS) in the Special Computer Center (SCC), then into the Information Management Staff's Intelligence Information Dissemination System (IIDS). The PCS Intelligence Information Dissemination Branch (IID) uses IIDS for the processing and dissemination of intelligence cables to its customers throughout the Intelligence Community. After review and editing by an IID officer, intelligence cables are released electronically through the SCC. This electronic release requires that the cable pass through a number of computer links controlled by different software. The SCC routes the cables to the Electronic Cable Origination Handler (ECOH), which passes them on to the MPS through the CDS Message Handling Facility (MHF). The cables then go to the Automated Communications Terminal Originating Replacement (ACTOR) and on to the Second Phase Automated Relay Switch (SPARS) for transmission to the Community.

3. On 29 June, IID received a 56-section intelligence cable (approximately 7000 lines of text) which dealt with [REDACTED]

25X1 [REDACTED] Because IID had previously experienced difficulties with sending lengthy cabled reports through ECOH, the IID officer contacted the controllers of the various computer links to advise them that this particular cable was being released. All those contacted indicated there should be no problem with the release. However, ECOH was unable to pass on the cable to the next stage of the release system (CDS/MHF). It was discovered at this time that ECOH, which has a

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maximum capacity of 4000 lines of text, was not able to handle this important cable. A number of calls by IID to the Office of Information Technology (OIT) resulted in an OIT programmer, who acknowledged that ECOH did not have the capability to process a message of this length, deciding to assist the report manually through to CDS/MHF. It was then discovered that CDS/MHF likewise did not have the capability to process the message. Because of the importance of the subject matter of the report and the fact that two days had already elapsed since the release of the report by IID, IID decided to produce hard copies of the report and have them sent by courier to the primary customers. This decision was made with the understanding that efforts would continue to get the message through CDS and to the customer agencies electronically.

4. When Chief, IID, learned the afternoon of 1 July that CDS programmers had given up the effort to get the cable through the system electronically and had, in fact, purged it from the communications system, he insisted that OIT find some way to effect electronic dissemination of this very important report immediately because of the extreme interest already expressed by analysts in the Directorate of Intelligence (DI) who had read it. The DI analysts commented that the information in the report is needed by [redacted] on a timely basis [redacted]

5. In response to the insistence of Chief, IID, an OIT engineer assisted IID officers in dividing the report into two separate cables to permit its handling by ECOH. The report was finally disseminated electronically the evening of 1 July.

6. This case is only the latest and most dramatic failure of ECOH and CDS to handle both the volume of traffic passing through it and the length of certain particularly long, but important, intelligence cables. Failures by ECOH and CDS have often resulted in unacceptable delays in the dissemination to the Community of vital intelligence information. Planned upgrades of the system will dramatically increase the flow of cable traffic through these communications links. As the volume continues to increase, additional and potentially more serious problems are likely to occur. Please take the necessary action to direct OIT to review the need to increase the capacity of existing computerized cable processing links to ensure that they are able to handle the inevitable larger volume and greater length of cable traffic.

CC: O/DDA
D/OIT

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15 July 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Information Technology
Deputy Director of Information Technology

25X1 FROM: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Telephone Call from C/IMS

25X1 1. While you were out of the building you received a telephone call from [REDACTED] C/IMS/DO, at 1115 hours. I was able to answer his question regarding the status of an OIT action item, however, he also wanted to pass along a "heads up."

25X1 2. It appears that a memo has been sent from C/PCS through the DDO to the Executive Director concerning problems in the Intelligence Information Dissem. Branch and more specifically concerning the ECOH system and the loss or garbling of critical operational cables. Ken knows that OIT is working on the problems ([REDACTED] I think). It appears that the memo asks the ExDir to have OIT devote whatever resources are necessary to fix the problem NOW.

25X1 3. I thanked Ken very much for the information and promised that I would brief you. You might want to give him a call to thank him again and reemphasize the fact that we are working on it. His green line is [REDACTED] Let me know if I can do anything further on this for you..

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